

What is claimed is:

1. A system comprising:

a stimulus client configured to receive user input requesting an Internet Protocol (IP) telephony service and communicate the received input over a packet-based network using a standard call control protocol;

a call agent, executing on a remote server connected to the packet-based network, configured to perform the requested IP telephony service based on the received input.

2. The system of claim 1 in which the stimulus client comprises an application layer configured to communicate with an end-user and a call control protocol stack configured to communicate with the call agent using the standard call control protocol.

3. The system of claim 2 in which the stimulus client's call control protocol stack comprises a Media Gateway Control Protocol (MGCP) stack.

4. The system of claim 2 in which the stimulus client's call control protocol stack comprises an ITU-T H.248 stack.

5. The system of claim 2 in which the application layer comprises a user interface having a plurality of graphical controls.

6. The system of claim 1 in which the received user input comprises Dual Tone Multi-Frequency (DTMF) input.

7. The system of claim 1 in which the call agent comprises:

a feature server configured to provide telephony services to telephony endpoints;

a signaling gateway configured to facilitate communication between the feature server and one or more endpoints; and

one or more call control protocol stacks configured to facilitate signaling between the call agent and the one or more endpoints.

8. The system of claim 7 in which the feature server is capable of providing supplementary services to one or more endpoints.

9. The system of claim 8 in which the supplementary services comprise ITU-T H.450 supplementary services.

10. The system of claim 7 in which the feature server provides non-standard telephony services to one or more endpoints.

11. The system of claim 7 in which one or more call control protocol stacks comprise one or more of a Media Gateway Control Protocol (MGCP) stack, an ITU-T H.248 stack, a Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) stack, and an ITU-T H.323 stack.

12. A client application comprising:

an application layer configured to receive Dual Tone Multi-Frequency (DTMF) input corresponding to a requested Internet Protocol (IP) telephony service; and

a call control protocol stack configured to communicate the received DTMF input to a feature server over a packet-based network using a standard call control protocol.

13. The application of claim 12 in which the application layer comprises a user interface having a plurality of graphic controls for receiving user input.

14. The application of claim 12 in which the call control protocol comprises a Media Gateway Control Protocol (MGCP).

15. The application of claim 12 in which the call control protocol comprises an ITU-T H.248 protocol.

16. The application of claim 12 in which the application includes substantially no software

infrastructure for performing IP telephony services locally.

17. The application of claim 12 in which the application comprises a set of interpreted commands.

18. The application of claim 17 in which the application comprises an applet performed by a virtual machine.

19. A method comprising:

in response to receiving user input requesting initiation of Internet Protocol (IP) telephony service, downloading and launching an IP telephony client application;

receiving at the IP telephony client input from a user identifying a telephony service;

communicating the received input to a feature server; and

based on the communicated input, performing the identified telephony service at the feature server.

20. The method of claim 19 in which the received user input comprises Dual Tone Multi-Frequency (DTMF) input.

21. The method of claim 19 in which downloading and launching an IP telephony client application comprises transparently downloading, from a user's perspective, a set

of commands to be interpreted and performed by a process executing on a computer platform associated with the user.

22. The method of claim 21 in which the set of commands comprises an applet to be performed by a virtual machine executing on the computer platform associated with the user.

23. The method of claim 19 in which the IP telephony client communicates with the feature server using a standard call control protocol.

24. Computer software, embodied in a computer-readable medium and/or a propagated carrier signal, comprising instructions for a computer system to perform the following:

present a telephony user interface that includes graphical controls for receiving input from a user;

receive from a user Dual Tone Multi-Frequency (DTMF) input corresponding to a requested IP telephony service; and

communicate the received DTMF input to a feature server over a packet-switched network using a standard call control protocol.

25. The software of claim 24 further comprising instructions to receive information from the feature server

26. The software of claim 24 in which the standard call control protocol comprises a stimulus protocol.

28. The software of claim 24 in which the standard call control protocol comprises an ITU-T H.248 protocol.

30. The software of claim 24 further comprising instructions to receive user input requesting initiation of Internet Protocol (IP) telephony service and, in response to the received user input, download and launch an IP telephony client application.